FLYMOLO Preseason Interview

Riley: Here with Fly, or FLYMOLO. Fly has been an integral person to MLTP in the past. Her accolades include 30 seasons of competitive,12 years of pubs, two Mupers, 12 seasons as CRC, Ball of Fame, TPFG, and past captain and MTC member. FLY has done a lot of community work too — video editing, doing montages, newsletters, and podcasts.

FLY: I think I've done it all.

Riley: I think you've done it all. Scripts, too.

So this will just be a general interview, especially with her being back on the CRC, and a lot of it will be focused on the newer side of things. So we'll go ahead and get started.

First off, Fly — how are you feeling about the current state of TagPro –

FLY: TagPro? I thought you were going to ask about MLTP.

Riley: TagPro and MLTP, as this being like the last season of the year.

FLY: Yeah, I mean, I think it feels pretty optimistic. It was funny — when Josh came back into the community, like, I don't know, a year ago or whenever, whenever I came back — he was posting Pigoon's video and BallDontLie's video and asked if I wanted to share mine too, and I said no. But I also distinctly remember that during that video being almost sad, I think — the whole theme of it was like "happy it happened," you know, even if nothing more happens. And this was maybe six years ago.

So I think the mentality for me — where I was then, when Josh was doing his interviews, versus where I am now — is actually way more positive. I think people tend to be somewhat negative about everything, but as someone who sees everything and is involved in everything, I feel very optimistic that TagPro has a positive trajectory. MLTP seems to be moving upwards as well. Yeah, I'd rather be an optimist for sure.

Riley: It's been easier to be an optimist for sure the past few years, kind of across the board.

FLY: Yeah, absolutely. I think you have to have people who care a lot to be successful and that sort of thing. Having the opportunity to make a difference is a big piece, and then having people who see that opportunity and actually take it is the second piece. TagPro had stagnated because the developer team was so small and kind of close to Lucky's chest, and then he opened it up, created the Future Group — and then things started to happen.

I think as people started taking more ownership and feeling more responsible for the game, instead of it being Lucky's game, right now it's the Future Group's game. It's Bash's game, it's

Orchid's game, it's Cheese's game, it's my game — and we have a lot more ownership and desire and willingness to put in whatever time is needed to make change.

Riley: Yeah, it definitely does make it easier to feel passionate when there's a lot more people owning TagPro in a sense. We've had a lot of momentum — this has been a pretty good year, I think. We've had the Frozen Balls, your site went up before Season 38 this year. How would you compare this year to other post-COVID years, when we had a boom in 2020?

FLY: I don't remember it that well, honestly. I think my life changed so much at different points in time. I know I've played most seasons but I'll take a year or two off from time to time. And COVID was such a weird time I don't really remember the immediate proceeding seasons clearly. Have you looked at the stats for what the signup numbers were like in Season 20, or the early 20s?

Riley: I came back for my second season in 2020, mid-2020, Season 18, and there was a good amount of signups — I think each team had six or seven players, but same here, I came back for that one season and then left again for a few years, so I don't quite know how much. But I'd say — ranked, we've almost had a year of ranked. We've had the replays for about a year —

FLY: We've had the replays for way longer, because I've been using the replays for various things, and they came in during Season 33. Season 33 was the first season that had all the games covered by replays.

Riley: So that was probably 2023 or early 24.

FLY: Yeah, since it's usually three seasons a year — so three years ago.

Riley: We definitely have some momentum. Speaking of the Frozen Balls being a push we had this year — you did mention Homek's website for the Frozen Balls being a bit of an inspiration. What were the early stages of mltp.gg, and how much of the vision have you fulfilled?

FLY: Yeah, I'd heard about vibe coding maybe two or three years ago and was kind of like, "okay, whatever," and didn't think about it. Then my job started pushing AI more and I got curious. Long story short — when I saw Homek had made his site, I thought, "okay, I wonder how hard it is to do something like that." I started playing around, and it wasn't that hard.

From there it kind of spiraled into: okay, what would I make for TagPro if I just sat down and focused — what's the most tangible, interesting thing to put out there? The way I work is I make a plan, think about it, try to break the idea — before I even start building anything. So even before I had the first live version of mltp.gg, I had a whole plan for everything I'd want it to include. It needs rosters, schedules, a way for GMs to make transactions, the rules — everything.

The first iteration, I think I built the schedule first, and it just continued from there. A lot of it is still working from my original blueprint — advanced stats, things like that — but things come up when you put your creation out into the world. People have feedback, people have ideas, and

I'm always taking that and re-incorporating it into the overall picture to see what I want to do soon versus what I might defer.

Riley: Yeah, it can shift your priorities, what's on the list first.

FLY: Yeah. And I'm a person who can fail at thinking things through too — things I didn't even think about until I'm in the midst of it. Like, "okay, we built the signups, but someone wants to withdraw their signup — okay, we have that built in. But what if we need to analyze the signup? Maybe we're not sure if they're a smurf." We have to build a tool to hold a signup so it doesn't show on the ticker list until we're comfortable that person is not a fake signup. Things like that — you don't realize how things are breakable until someone's broken it, and then you adjust on the fly.

Riley: Does it feel like playing whack-a-mole a little bit?

FLY: It depends. Right now it's pretty stable. During the first part of Season 38, during the draft and all the lead-up, it definitely felt like I was constantly adjusting. But it's a lot more stable now, and it's more about enhancing than "oh my god, I never thought of this, I have a really big issue" — which is good.

Riley: It looks really legit now. Paired with an upcoming Steam release and a potential redesign, I think your site will make the pub-to-comp pipeline a little easier. Do you think TagPro is on the brink of its next golden age?

FLY: A golden age? I hope so. I think we're putting a lot of eggs in the Steam basket, and I don't want to detract from that at all. I think there's a lot that makes TagPro attractive, and it could become popular on Steam. We have some strategies in place — you can put the game page up on Steam before it even goes live, and if the existing community really puts it on their wishlist, hypes it up, whatever — we have a very dedicated player base that can generate some buzz. Think about how TagPro got as big as it did at one point — it was purely players hyping it up, brigading on Reddit. We could do the same thing for Steam, in a way that's actually kind of encouraged and recommended, if everyone contributes and does their part. I think it could give us a lot of help.

From my perspective, the first few days on Steam are so critical, because a new game getting a lot of hype is very different from a game that launches, isn't perfect, people don't love it, and then they disappear. They're not going to come back three months later even if it's in a better place.

So my big push as a Future Group member has been: this is our chance. If we're going to fix it, we need to fix it now — it's not worth hoping to fix it after we go live on Steam.

Riley: Yeah, it's not like Cyberpunk where we can fix it later — we'd rather have it perfect first.

FLY: Yeah — "perfection" is probably too strong a word, but I think a lot of the things TagPro doesn't do well are things we have to address. When people think redesign, I think a lot of

people think of it visually — which it will change, how TagPro looks — but it's also how TagPro is organized, and the user experience, which I think is a huge piece, especially the new player experience.

Okay, I'm a new player — I hit play now. Now I have to choose between ranked and casual, but I can't actually choose ranked. Okay, I go into casual. A couple minutes later I'm put into a game. There's a lot of points along the way where it can break — especially depending on how many players we have live. If it's taking minutes upon minutes to get into a game, are you really going to wait around? And if you finally get put into a game and get absolutely dusted in three minutes, is that really a fun experience? You have no idea what's going to happen, you have no context, and you're probably going to lose. Is that fun?

I think a lot of why people liked it during the Reddit pushes back in the 2015 era was because it was all new players and no one knew what they were doing. But now, if you're new and going against someone who's played for a decade, it's not going to be quite so fun. So thinking about how a new player onboards — do you get put into a tutorial first, a bot match first, taught the concepts before you're in a real public queue — thinking through that experience too.

Riley: Yeah, being focused on new people will definitely be a plus.

FLY: Yeah, because hopefully, if TagPro's launch on Steam goes well, all of a sudden — I think people underrate how many active users TagPro currently has. It's in the thousands. Say we have five to ten thousand people who play at least once a month, but some of those only play a couple times a week. Say we have a thousand daily unique users — if all of a sudden we have five thousand daily unique users, then only 20% of those are experienced. The vast majority are new people, and you should really be catering to them. You've already convinced the old heads the game is good — you don't need to convince them further. It's those other four thousand people you need to convince to keep returning. I don't think we've really thought about that too much in the past.

Riley: Yeah, it's definitely exciting — easier to share with friends too, having it on Steam.

Well, to circle back to more community and comp questions — 2015 to 2018 is considered TagPro's golden age, or its best age, most active for sure. What are some of your early memories from that era, like CRC-ing or making content?

FLY: Yeah, I think it's the Mumble-type experience — you log in, you're in a channel, there's people there. The way people would just lurk all day on Mumble, signed in waiting for someone to hit you up: "Oh, you're online, I'm online, let's play, what's going on?" That sort of community was really strong. Whereas with Discord, if you're online, it doesn't mean you're online *for TagPro* — I could be playing Football Manager, people could be playing Valorant, whatever. It's not like you're intentionally there for TagPro the same way people were on Mumble. I have a lot of fond memories of those experiences, the different channels, how people organized it.

From a content perspective — when I first joined the community, one of the first people I met was jjpoole, and he was on Tears, so the Tears people kind of adopted me early on. Him, TPR,

DudeMcGuy, Tro Balll, Tyrus was kind of around. Tears made the Super Ball in Season 6. At that point I'd never really edited a video before, but my university gave us free access to all the Adobe tools, and DudeMcGuy was a video editor, so he gave me a brief rundown on how to use Adobe After Effects. I started making hype videos for the Super Ball, which was really fun — that really started a lot of my content creation in the TagPro community.

Riley: That's awesome, I didn't know you made hype videos back then.

FLY: Yeah, there's some good ones — check the YouTube out. I think, with content generally — I've always used TagPro as my playground to learn a new skill, I guess I'd say. I didn't know how to edit videos — "okay, let me just try and make something for TagPro, it's not that serious." I'd never coded anything before — "I'll just try and make a website, whatever, it's no biggie." I think it's easy to launch an idea off a platform you know so intimately, rather than come up with something completely novel.

Riley: Yeah, there's so many different creative outlets TagPro offers — only a few games out there like that, I think.

So, your first season CRC-ing was Season 10 — that was 30 seasons ago, over 10 years ago. What first made you consider leadership, what steps did you take back then, and how have you kept that going?

FLY: Yeah, I think I view being a member of a community as participating and doing what you can. I don't know exactly why I chose the CRC. I distinctly remember applying in Season 8 and 9 and not getting selected — I definitely didn't get in the first time applying. I remember going so hard in the Reddit thread, because you'd apply and then they'd make a Reddit thread and you had to defend your application, and I remember caring so much and getting no traction.

So Season 10 was probably about a year and a bit after I'd been in the community — I'd made videos, I'd been around, I think I'd joined the MTC around that point — just really making a push of "hey, I want to be a part of this community and hear on the things I'm doing." With that in mind, being CRC was just the next step. I don't know if I *desire* to be in a leadership role, but I'm always willing to do it, and in a lot of volunteer scenarios there's an absence of people who want to do it — so I just tend to fill in the gaps.

Riley: Yeah, that checks out with the philosophy you've had. In your first CRC application, you touched on that — you mentioned two guiding principles for your interest in real life and TagPro: constant improvement, and unacknowledged appreciation. I figure those are still important to you.

FLY: Yeah, sounds about right. I was very philosophical in college — I think I've grown out of it a bit.

Riley: That's a good way to regroup yourself, getting into philosophy.

So circling back to the new site — is it your magnum opus? What are you most proud of out of all your contributions to TagPro?

FLY: Yeah, I'm definitely proud of it. I think it's a very satisfying experience — being an "ideas person" is interesting, but seeing something tangible and seeing people interact with it is very satisfying, kind of fun too. I love stats, so being able to see how many unique people visit the site, how many people have signed up — it's a very tangible sense of contribution, rather than making a YouTube video that gets a hundred or a couple hundred views. That's less satisfying in terms of direct external validation.

I don't know if I did it for the validation, though — I almost feel like people now are going too over the top on it. Everyone's like "this is the best thing in a decade," which is nice to hear, but it's a lot of pressure at the same time. I appreciate the kind words, but yeah, it's a lot.

Riley: Well, the site *is* a lot too, so I can understand where you're coming from. It doesn't change how things are done, per se — it does have the draft on there, but it hasn't added any players, hasn't changed how seasons are structured or anything. But I think people are desperate for new stuff too, so that's a big part of it. And being a tool, it's a tangible way to see people have appreciated it.

You took a nine-season break, outside of two seasons, between Season 29 and 37 — that coincided with your longest break from CRC, from 28 to 38. How did it feel to get back on the saddle and gather yourself again? Did the break keep you fresh?

FLY: Yeah, I mean — I lost the Super Ball and said, "that was devastating emotionally," for the second time, and I said, "I don't really know if I want to keep toiling away at it." I think it was just a point in my life — this is Season 29, so three-ish years ago, three and a half years ago. It was a different point in my life where I was pursuing other things and was kind of satisfied with everything I'd achieved in TagPro. From my perspective, I was a bona fide Majors player at that point, I had respect from a community and player perspective, and I didn't feel the need to prove myself anymore, and had other things I wanted to do. So it was nice to step away.

I don't really know why I came back — I think I was just bored and wanted something to do, and TagPro is a very comfortable thing for me, always easy to slip back into. I think that's why you see people come back after years away, time and time again.

Riley: For sure. Even f you play just one season of comp, or pub a few times, or contribute in a certain way, TagPro's always in the back of your mind.

FLY: Yeah.

Riley: I'm not sure why I came back either — I know why during COVID, because I was bored and inside, but I took another year's-long break, and I guess it just never leaves you.

Okay, this is a softball — what type of music do you generally play in-game?

FLY: In casual or in a competitive game? I think it really depends.

Riley: Either casual or ranked.

FLY: If I'm playing ranked, I'll probably put on something very chill — classical music or something like that, not aggressive at all, to try and stay chill. If it's casual, I listen to a lot of house music, or kind of electronic-type stuff.

Riley: Yeah, I haven't tried classical during ranked before — I'm usually doing house or electronic too. Maybe that does make me play a little more recklessly, though — maybe I should try classical, or some Mac DeMarco.

FLY: I think it's more of an intentional mind-setting thing — okay, I'm going to listen to this music, I'm going to be patient. It helps me switch the mentality. If you're doing the exact same things — like if you're playing a casual game where you're free, not being very serious or intentional — it's a lot easier to slip back into that. If you create a divide between how you act when you're trying and how you act when you're not, you have a clear delineation.

Riley: Yeah, slower music can make you think a little more. Music's a big thing with whatever you're doing.

Just a couple more questions — also in your first CRC application, you mentioned motivating streamers as a priority. Last season had a dip in the amount of games streamed, specifically in Novice. Does this season's CRC plan on doing the same — maybe motivating streamers in some way?

FLY: Yeah, probably. I funded a lot of the prize pool last season, and while I'll put money into things, I'm not just going to frivolously throw it away. I think the Novice season was weird — most of the games that went unstreamed were CT's team, and he was an absent captain at best, so that didn't really help. I'll do what I can to help streaming — one of the very first things I built into the site was letting people claim streams, trying to make it as easy as possible to know who was streaming what, because the hub wasn't getting updated and that seemed to be a major issue. Trying to make it as easy for people to stream as possible — but again, you're volunteering to spend an hour and a half of your night, and sometimes you don't want to watch an hour and a half of low-quality TagPro.

Riley: Of Novice TagPro.

FLY: Yeah — I think honestly Novice is better to stream than Minors. Minors is the most infuriating, because they do really dumb things, but you also expect more from them, so it's more exasperating when they do something mind-numbingly dumb.

Riley: Yeah, they're the middle child of competitive in that way —

FLY: and they act it too.

Riley: [laughter] Yeah. Maybe for myself, I don't know — I'm thinking how I could contribute. I guess doing advertisements for streams, kind of like Homek did a few times.

FLY: Yeah, I think it's fun. I think being genuine in whatever you create — as long as you're into what you're making and you get fulfillment from it, that's the way to go into content creation. If you're trying to chase the thing you think will get the most attention, trying to get validation from it, it's a lot harder of a path.

If no one had used my site, I still would have gotten value out of it, from the whole experience of having an idea and seeing it come to fruition and learning something along the way. But if I had only made it and would only have been satisfied if it became as big as it has, gotten all the compliments — I think I'd have burnt out even faster, or found it an unsatisfying experience. So that's my recommendation — whatever you're most passionate about. Like, you're really into movies? Write a piece comparing every team to a movie or something —

Riley: That's a million-dollar idea right there.

FLY: Yeah, tap into what you really know and work from there. And even if it doesn't get the most eyes on it, if you have passion for it, if you enjoy it, other people will have passion for it, and will see that.

Riley: For sure. So, kind of like we said earlier, I think this was a really notable year for TagPro, in a mix of ways. Can 2027 be even better?

FLY: Yeah, I'd hope so. There's still a lot of room to go with what I want to do with the site, and with TagPro — if we're aiming for a December, holiday-type release, you'd probably see the impacts of all that more in 2027 than this year.

Riley: Yeah, a December release would be cool — Steam for Christmas.

FLY: Yeah, hopefully. We're working — putting a lot of time in. I know people can't see everything, so when people complain about it, I'm always a little like, "okay guys, I promise you things are happening, you just can't see it." But things are definitely happening.

Riley: Yeah, I've heard murmurs of things — I'm excited, very excited, even if I've been pessimistic in the past.

Okay, last one — what advice can you give on being a leader?

FLY: I don't know. I think you either have it or you don't — either you want to have that expectation. I don't think you can't improve as a leader, but I think you inherently have to have to do right by people, and not be tempted to do things that benefit you. There's a selflessness to it. So, I don't know —

Riley: You kind of need the right personality, in a way.

FLY: Yeah, I do. I think you have to figure out what kind of leader you're trying to be, and what being a leader means to you. Being an NLTP captain because you want to teach someone is a great type of leadership, really valuable — it doesn't have to be the same as being a CRC. There's a different type of skill set — being someone who's responsible to make things happen, versus someone who's setting an example for others. It's not one-size-fits-all.

So from that perspective, pick whatever excites you — it goes back to creating content. If you're trying to pursue leadership, what kind of leadership are you interested in, and what's your reason for that? I don't think anyone who's like, "oh, I want power," should be a leader. The only people who should be in power are people who don't explicitly want power for power's sake.

I'm not CRC-ing because I want to be able to ban people — that's the worst part of the job. My ideal scenario is no one does anything sheisty all season long, and the league can just function and I don't have to worry about it at all. So anyone who's trying to CRC to control stuff — I'm always a little dubious as to whether they're actually going to do the right thing.

Riley: Yeah, you want the people with the best ideas, not the people who want power.

FLY: No, I don't even know if it's about ideas, though — because I think ideas people can be the worst CRC members, because they only care about their ideas being implemented and don't want to do anything else. Okthen had a lot of good ideas last season, but I didn't know if he'd be a good CRC member when he applied because — he ran OTI, he did his betting site, but those were things he had full control over. Are you willing to do the things that kind of suck?

Riley: Yeah, there's a difference between actually implementing and collaborating on ideas versus just having them.

FLY: You're not going to get your way all the time — you're going to get outvoted, things aren't going to go your way sometimes, and there are definitely people in the community who won't enjoy it when things don't go how they want.

Riley: Yeah, that ties back to being a leader — being flexible, in a way, too.

FLY: Yeah. So I don't know, I don't really have advice, I'm just—

Riley: Well, I think you still got nuggets of advice in there.

That'll be just about all the questions — do you have any closing comments or thoughts?

FLY: Nope. I'm always happy to talk about TagPro — obviously I care a lot, I don't think anyone could accuse me of otherwise. If you have ideas for the league, for TagPro, my DMs are always open — I'm willing to entertain anything. And if you want to contribute in some way and need help, or need a place to bounce ideas off of — yeah, again, always happy to help get new content creators going.

[End of interview]